Center for Modern Greek Studies

Greek American Oral History Project
Transcription

Tape: P2

Subject: Beata Panagopoulos
Third Party:
Interviewer: Julie Armin
Date of Interview: March 7, 2004

Transcriber: Nicole Fernandez
Date of Transcription: August 20, 2014

Counter: 000
Tape 1, Side A

I: This is Julie and I am here the Beata Panagopoulos on Sunday, March 7, 2004. And we'll start out with a question about where were you born and where you lived in Greece during your childhood?

B: I was born in Athens and I lived in Greece until the age of twenty when I came to the United States. I-

I: And where in Athens did you live?

B: I lived, well I didn't live in the same house the whole time. I lived on Hayden Street, a nice English name. Ήπον Patision <"in Greek" {008}> in Hayden until the age of seven, and we were renting that house. It was a very big house. Then we moved to Constitution Square on Xenofondos <check spelling {010}>, and that was a lovely house that belonged to Kambas <check spelling {011}>. Kambas had wines and we were renting that house. And-

I: Was Kambas the name of a company or a person?

B: It's the man and the company. And-

I: Can you spell his name for me?

B: Hmm?

I: Can you spell his name for me?

B: K-A-M-B-A-S.

I: Okay. Thank you.

B: Both these houses were very large houses. You want the description of the house?

I: Sure.

B: Well in the façade, the front, there were three rooms that when you open them up you could have 250 people invited, let's say. Or I remember having 45 people for dinner sitting down. But the doors would close, and there was a study, a dining room, and a living room. Then there was a hallway, this all in the front of the house. And in the middle of the house there was a little courtyard. Then otherside towards Xenofondos <check spelling {023}>, were three bedrooms, and then in the back there was a kitchen. The kitchens were enormous, with—like they had in the 19th century. And then there was a place for ironing and washing and so on. And we had three people that would help. We had a cook, and a room-I mean the

maid, and the butler.

I: It sounds like your parents did a lot of entertaining.

B: They did a lot, especially when my brother and sister were baptized. I remember those parties, because I told you there were 250 people. I was let's say from seven to about fourteen I lived in that house. My brother was ten years younger, my sister eight years younger. And then we moved to Kolanaki <check spelling {036}>, which is a rich suburb, rich—no suburb—a rich part of the town. And-

I: Can you spell Kolanaki for me?

B: Kolonaki? How it's written? K-O-L-O-N-A-K-I.

I: Okay.

B: Unofrtunately today, it's full of stores that sell shoes. And most of the people there come from other areas. Everything I am going to tell you is connected to politics in Greece, because we've had so much that disturbed the country. So the house, this last one, this last apartment was bought because in 1935, '36 we had some coup, I don't remember exactly what kind of military coup and we didn't have—my father lost his job. He did that several times in his life. So anyway he lost his job and my mother was so upset, because we had to go and live in a very nice suburb but not a home. She said I have to have my own house I don't want to be constantly moving around and she went herself to Babarasos <check spelling>, who was a banker. He was the governor of the bank of Greece and she said "Look, Kyriako <check spelling {053}> I have to have for my children a steady place. I want to buy an apartment in Athens so that they can—we can live there in the winter. And then I want a summerhouse in Ekali. So, I want a loan from the bank, and as you know, we will pay it immediately as soon as we can." So this is the way we got this house, and we also got a summerhouse. It was all in 1936. So I am around about my dates. So I was born in 1925, '35 I was eleven not fourteen. Well that's about it.

I: Okay. And where did you go for primary and secondary school?

B: I went to—the primary school was a private school. Actually some people who had some money, or sent there children to private schools <coughs> the problem with the other schools that were not private was that there were too many children. And so the teacher couldn't get around to them. But they were good schools. So I went a school called Krikou, that was not very close to where we were living. But uh-

I: Can you spell the name of the school?

B: Krikou? K-R-I-K-O-U. <clears throat>

I: Thank you. So you didn't live very close to Krikou?

B: It wasn't close. But my parents had made arrangement with this Barbarasos, the banker, who had daughter there. And his driver would take me and bring me back form school. It was an all girl school. Very good, but all girls. That was important because I didn't like being with all girls. <laughs> So, in 1940 the Germans. Sorry I have to back track. When I was twelve I went to the German school in Athens and that was also private for the Greek kids. It was public for the German kids. There was lots of Germans in Athens because there was an archeological school and many of the teachers or archeologists lived in Athens. Their children went there. And it was an excellent school, absolutely excellent. The only problem was that they were Germans. <laughs> Before the war it didn't matter, but when this war started it became a great problem, because the Germans came into Greece in 1940, 41, 41 more than 40. 40 was the war and then 41 they came in. My parents didn't want me to continue going there to school. And I was desparate so I went back to Krikou for a year and I didn't like it and I kept grumbling about it. And some incident happened where my father who was very strict was upset about and I can't tell the story because it is a bit shocking. I mean shocking.

There was girl sitting next to me who had lost her parents and they had died in a car accident. So she lived with her aunt and uncle. Well the uncle became very bold and she rather liked it. So she would come and tell me the progress of this. And I would listen with great attention because it was my first experience of hearing not doing. So when the year ended she went to Loutraki <check spelling {102}>, which is a summer place, it's a--And I went to the house that we had just gotten in the country in Akali <check spelling>, and maybe I left a letter around, or somehow she had written some of this to me, and my father read it. He was in—he thought it was a calamity that I would turn out to be <laugh> let's not say what. So he was persuaded that I needed to change schools, and my mother too. But we made a deal that if I went to the German school, whenever they taught history. Because they were teaching Greek history, Greek language and literature. But also German literature and German history. So whenever I heard German history, I had to come home, tell my father all about it, he would correct me. And we put things in place, because German history was under Hitler was completely distorted. But I learned good history well with all of this. So that's it.

I: So, you're—you mentioned that your father lost his job at one point. Now what was your father doing?

B: Okay. I have to start in the beginning. My father lost his father when he was fifteen. So he had to be in charge of the whole family. But my father also finished high school when he was fifteen. And when he was nineteen he finished the technical university in Greece, or in Athens, called Polytechnion <check spelling {121}>. And he was good so they wanted to give him a scholarship to Germany. Now why did we have these close relations with Germany? Because we had a

King called Otto in the 19th century. And especially with Munic and Bavaria, we had very close ties. So he went to Germany, he took his family and he studied there, engineering, math. And the he went to France and studied philosophy. Because he believed that everyone should have philosophy, it was a must. So he two very important teachers, one Bergson and one Poincaré, very old. Then he came back, because of the war that had, in 1914, was the First World War. So he went to the army. Then at the end of the war he joined a party in Greece of Venizelos. Well Venizelos was a great statesmen, he was not a politician, like all these rest of what we've had. And in there in that group was Papandreou, many people that became very famous in Greece. So he got good jobs because of the closeness he had to Venizelos, and he among those, he build the port in Crete, in Heraklion <check spelling>. And last summer they made a bust of my father and put it in the port. <laughs> Then he organized the Technical—Technikone Materiolo <check spelling {144}>. Like the chamber of commerce, but it is for engineers. He was senator at that time. That's why he had to have so many people, invite so many people, and so on. Well it's a very long list that he did as an engineer at that time, and he also became full professor at the Polytechnion when he was twenty-seven years old. Now-

I: And what about your mother?

B: My mother married very young. She was sixteen when she got married, and I was born when she was eighteen. However, even though she came a provincial town in Crete, in Heraklion, from a good family. Now good, I mean her father had been a lawyer and they came from Egypt. And they came form Egypt because she had twelve brothers and sisters. But when she was born there were only about three left. They all died at a mature age because there was so many sicknesses in Egypt. I mean tuberculosis was rampant. The malaria was all over the place. So it was very hard to stay alive. So they left and came to Athens—not Athens—to Crete I mean. Now my father—my grandfather was from Crete, but his wife, my grandmother, was from Venice. In Venice there was Greeks since the time the Turks took over the Byzantine Empire many, many Greeks left and went to Venice. Around they built a church of St. George, and near that church of St. George there was this Greek area. The name was Dantonio <check spelling {172}>, but it was really Italianized. The Greek name was Andoniou. And-

I: Can you spell the Greek name for me?

B: Andoniou? A-N-D-O-N-I-O-U. Andoniou. But you know they changed the name to sound Italian. And then she went to Egypt where there was also a Greek colony. My father came in 1920, to Crete. Finally they were going to fix the port. The port there was a small port from the Venetian period. And we had since—because if you don't know history well, it's difficult—but the Greeks were under the Turks until 19-1825. When they were liberated, a lot of this had to do with the Allies you helped them. But as you know you never get anything for free. From then on they were constantly giving advice, meddling and so on. The English

allies did not want Heraklion because they had a port in Sitia. What the reasoning, I don't know exactly. The small port had never been expanded, but in 1920—yeah 1919, they were finally ready to expand. That's when my father was sent by an English company to build the port. The English company was called, in fact it was Scottish, Macalain. Macalain <check spelling {198}>. And well he met my mother. He had no place to stay, and my mother—my grandmother had no husband, so she was renting something. And he stayed there. Now my mother was fourteen years old. So he thought he was interesting but nothing more of course. But she borrowed him a ring, he had a ring, not a wedding ring, and she liked it. So he gave it to her to wear. Then supposedly forgot to give it back when he was leaving. And so two years later when she was sixteen, her mother sold everything. And took her to go to Venice but they went to Athens. That's when her mother told her "you have to return the ring." And she went to return it, but in the meantime she had grown and she looked more beautiful and all that. And so my father asked her to marry her—him. And it seems that she wasn't right away ready for it. But he went back and forth on this Patission Avenue in a carriage until she said yes. So that's how it happened.

The other two kids who had survived, they were already married. And a very strange thing is that the oldest one, which was twenty-four years older than my mother, she nursed my mother, 'cause my grandmother was tired. After that many kids. So she nursed her together with her two kids. These are strange old things. Well then what happened is—I don't know, you better ask.

I: Okay. So what was it like to grow up in an upper-middle class family in Greece at that time when there was so much political unrest?

B: Now, it has to be louder the way you talk.

I: Okay. What was it like to grow up in an upper-middle class family in Greece at that time when there was so much unrest? Were you sheltered from it?

B: I was very, very sheltered. Very, very spoiled. And I loved my childhood. I thought it was wonderful, because I had everything that you could wish and I went on many trips in the summers. The first time I went to Paris, I was five and I remember clearly an exhibit that was colonial exhibit at the Park of Seine. And because I had never seen huts, I had never seen black people, and it was tremendous for me. If it existed now, I could take you there. Then I went to Germany the following summer, and what I discovered was that there were squirrels, which I had never seen before, and berries. Big experiences.

I: So traveling had an influence on you.

B: Yeah, I did already then, because my parents traveled. They took me along. Where it stopped is when my brother and sister were born, because it was difficult to go with babies and everything. And that was my—my sister was born in 1933.

I was born ’25, she was born ’33, and my brother in 1935.

I: What was your sister’s name?

B: Huh?

I: What was your sister’s name?

B: Elsa.

I: Elsa. And your brother?

B: My brother, Dmitri.

I: Okay. And so once they were born, your family stopped traveling for the most part.

B: Well it wasn’t just because they were born. When they were very little, I mean just a few years old, was difficult. In 1935, start a lot of problems for Greece, because Venizelos was not anymore Prime Minister. Then we had um a small dictatorship; uh we had big dictator, a hard one with Metaxas in 1935, or ’36. And then the Germans came, you see. Then the war started in Albania. And then there was the German occupation. So it wasn’t possible to go anywhere until nineteen—I left in 1947 for the United States. And my brother, sister the same year went to France.

I: Okay.

End of Tape 1, Side A {136}

Tape 1, Side B
{000}

<Long pause>

Starts {029}

B: Well, you have to ask me something.

I: Okay. Um what-languages do you speak? What languages did you learn?

B: My first language was actually French, because I had a governess. And the governess thought that if I speak Greek, I won’t be able to learn French. So naturally in my house, I spoke Greek. And naturally I was hearing it all the time. And it was that difficult for me to speak Greek also. But I learned French as a baby. Then when I was six, I learned German. Because we happened to see—

when I was six, was already 1931. And Germany had a very bad time. They were very poor. They had a lot of difficulties, even middle class families. So we had a maid that came from Germany. And I also had lessons, private lessons, which I hated. I used to hide under the table so as to not to learn. But finally I did. And English I learned well, only very late, when I was fourteen. That's why I have an accent, and I never tried to get rid of it because it doesn't really matter.

I: And you learned English in the German school that you attend?

B: No, I learned English at home, again from private tutoring. Um but I was much older at the time.

I: And you mentioned the German occupation during World War II.

B: Yeah.

I: Do you remember what it was—can you talk about what it was like live under occupation?

B: Oh yeah. Very well.

I: Okay.

B: Well, the German occupation was rough, very difficult. It was um—First of all the first year, 1941, people starved in the street. You heard continuously a cry of people saying, "I'm hungry." Terrible. In 1942 there was a decision by the Greeks that we must pull ourselves together because we would die otherwise. The Germans took everything from the country. They were an army that didn't carry with it their things with them. They depended on the land. So they took things from the factories. They took things from the land, and they took from everywhere. They left the country completely, you know, with nothing. We had—I don't know my father was wise—of course you can think I am prejudice, and it's okay, because I was very much, very attached to my parents. But he thought as soon as, you see first we had the Italian War, the war in Albania. Then when they retreated the Germans came down into the country and when they were doing this, or going to do this, I remember going out with my parents to a village outside where he had the summer house, Ekali, and bought all kinds of food that we put in one room. We stored it. And this was the room of a maid, but it was big enough that we could pile up a lot. The—what do I say now—The difficulty was of course that um these were black marketers. I mean as soon as they understand that there would be no food, but we survived this way. And we were feeding five people, extra from our own family during that whole year of '41. Then in '42 there was some food that was brought, sent over from the Red Cross. It was for instance they used to bring us cod fish, but dried which stunk. The whole town was stinking, but you could go from you home to the neighbor and eat the same food. Because they had cooked the same thing. <laughs> We also got pea soup.

And the pea soup was konkarne <check spelling {080}>, that is with meat, because it had insects in it. <laughs> We used to call it that, but it actually was insects. I can still not eat pea soup. Um the other difficulty, of course they were other people suffering much more than us. And so the Greeks wanted to resist. And they made--we had one organization called EAM. Uh, E-A-M. And there are people who think that they were communists. It's not wrong to say that, but it's not completely true.

They were yes, hoping, hoping that Soviet Russia would help them, would help Greece. Because Russia had always been close to Greece. During the Turkish occupation, many, many Greeks had big titles in Russia. They were princes. They were military people. Ypsilanti, for example, we have a town named Ypsilanti in Michigan, was Greek personality in Russia. Then they came to Greece because was Greece was freed, but we had this attachment. So they were hoping that the Russians would help us. That was not true. It never happened.

I: Did your parents talk to you about politics in the home?

B: Oh politics is way of living for the Greeks. If you go to a café always they talk politics. And my parents always spoke of the politics. My mother joined the Alliange <check spelling {101}>, which was a group which was doing things for other people. So she would work at the soup kitchen. We always were involved with it. And my father thought, I'll tell you one example, I said once to my father, "What a pity Greece isn't like Switzerland. And doesn't uh—Just be an archeological place and a tourist place." And he got so mad at me. And he said, "What do you mean? You want to castrate Greece?" <laughs>. Because the thought of not being actively involved in your future and not be interested is something that Greeks doesn't understand. He doesn't understand it, because Americans are very careful not to hurt anyone's feelings and so on. But they avoid the truth.

I: So-so um you felt as if your parents were very open with you about politics in the home. So maybe we can move onto um right before you came to America. You were at the University of Athens?

B: Yes. I had done—I had worked since I finished high school, because our finances were very bad. I worked—see we went through the whole war, and then there was nothing left. We managed to go through the war, but at the end there was nothing. So I worked for Doskiavis <check spelling>, who was an urban planner, and he had an office. And he was extremely interesting. He was doing drawings of the burnt villages by the Germans. So that they could be reconstructed afterwards. So I was drawing there, doing technical drawing. Um then I worked for the Bank of Greece, but for the English Section, for the payroll of soldiers. And that because of course we knew this meant Babaresos <check spelling> that I mentioned before. And my last job just before I came to the Untied States was UNRA. Now you don't know what UNRA is, but it was—I don't know either what to tell

you—I think it was a group that um not like the United Nations, but it was—Now the Unisef, you now that they have?

I: An aid? Kind of an aid group? It was a humanitarian group?

B: Humanitarian.

I: Oh.

B: That worked in Greece.

I: And what was the name again?

B: UNRA. U-N-R-A.

I: Oh! Okay.

B: Yeah.

I: And those are the initials of the organization.

B: Yeah. So I worked for these people, but at the same time I was enrolled at the university. I finished high school in 1943, but for a while the university was closed. So slowly, I finally was a—it opened, and I was taking courses at the university, but also at the Polytechnion were my father had been teaching. And I took technical drawing and art history, because they didn't teach art history at the time everywhere, not at all in Greece. You could only get courses in archaeology. And my, the idea was I wanted to be an interior decorator or something like that. But my father's advice was I needed to have a background for that and some history. So that's what I was doing.

I: Okay. And so you said that the university was closed, was that because of?

B: Because of—now we have to talk of history of events. When the Germans left, at first—I also I have to tell you I had a boyfriend. And that uh I met right after I finished high school, because my parents had made me promise—I was quite active in my life. And so, I had had friends, but they were so, didn't want me to have boyfriend 'til I was through with high school. So I promised not to. And the first—right away—as soon as I finished high school, I met a guy called Nikos Monferatos <check spelling {157}>, and uh we became very close. And then he was arrested by the Germans and sent to prison. That was very common to be arrested, and nothing very different.

I: Was it young men that they targ—Did they target young men? Because-

B: Anyone that—See people could—if anyone wanted to harm you, they could go and say whatever they wanted. Yeah. And so he had a friend, let's say, who told the Germans that he had a machine for you know like the Xeroxes.

I: Oh! So he could make pamphlets or uh.

B: Yes, yes. And so they arrested him. And you spent a long—quite awhile in prison. And I used to go with my little meatballs and all that so that he'd have something to eat. <laughs> And all that. Also what happened is that my father was out of a job after the Germans had left. The reason for that was that we had a coup, a- yes. Right after the Germans left in December 1944, I was arrested too.

I: What-what for?

B: You better have—I mean don't be shocked—it's a series of these things. What for. When the coup started, I was at my boyfriend's house, and we were sitting in his room, my mother was also there, but with the parents. They had told us that it's going to happen that there will be a coup. And it's better if you're not at home, because when my father was, he was chancellor at the university, he had the reputation of being to the left. The reason he had the reputation is that um incidents happened. For instance, students that were to the left would be put in prison, and my father would run to do what he can-could for them. Well in the meantime, it's a long story, the English who knew, were thinking of the future of what would happen when the Germans leave. Did not want Greece to be too close to Russia. Like at the beginning they didn't mind, but as time went on, they worried about it. So, they created different groups that were very, very to the right, but also militant. Excuse me. There was a difficulty within the university between the students, but for my father that was not correct. You cannot take the side of one student and not the other. So he helped many of them. And also what happened, for instance, one time there were some soldiers that came into the university, and my father—they were Germans. He went out and said, "What are you doing here?" They said, "we're just—." "Don't you ever step your foot in this institution. This is a school. You have no business here. You are soldiers. Get out of here! And don't you ever come again!" And they went out, because the Germans when you speak to them rough, they listen. So, uh there were these different things that had happened before. And not when my father was at the, not the other university, not the technical university, they had decided to fire certain people. It's a very long story, one has to take a book from history, and a good person to read from is, his name is—can you turn it off for a minute?

<tape is turned off {215}>
<tape is turned on {215}>

During the coup, the December coup, many things happened. It's always like that when there is a conflict. So they murdered people for no reason at all. They did awful things. Some punks, let's say. But it had a reaction.

I: And so you were told to not be at home during this coup.

B: Yes. They told us not to be at home. My father took the two younger kids to take them to his sister, and we were at my—at Nikos' house, let's say, boyfriend. And all of the sudden the police showed up. It was just at the beginning of the coup, very beginning, the third of December. And uh they came into the house looking for someone who was shooting supposedly from the roof. My mother, who was more involved than I, ran to the back of the house, jumped from the window and she jumped on the bakery, the roof of a bakery. Then she went to a hospital, because she had been a nurse during the war. So she went there thinking this was the safest place. I was in the other room. They came in there and arrested three of us; I mean my boyfriend, his cousin, and me.

I: So did you spend time in jail then?

B: Oh I spent three weeks, and it was-it's a story in itself. I don't know if you want the story.

I: I would like to hear it.

B: First they took us to the palace. It was the beginning and the army—this was the army—supported by the English. Winston Churchill was the main problem. This man had fixed ideas. I mean he was very good for the English, very good when they you know got off in Normandy, all of that. But he had—he was—he believed that royalty that kings and queens had to be in a country to have—for things to be stable. Now, there things in there that I have not said because it's very wrong, not because I don't want to. For instance, the whole government, the Greek government had left when the Germans came in. They went to Egypt. This wasn't looked at very well from the Greeks who stayed and suffered. And the Queen and the King had also gone to Egypt. And so anyway when the coup started, uh the English were helping the police force in Athens. They took us to the palace. The palace had in it 3,000 soldiers, and we were 28 women. <laughs> The-it's not pleasant to live in a palace, I wanted you to know, because the palace was not furnished. They weren't living in it. It was empty. So it was very cold and it was out of marble. And there was no food. They brought—I was given a little bit of food—I mean bread and so on—by a policeman who either thought that well I have a good name or that I looked good, younger than now of course. And so he was willing to things like that for me. The very unpleasant thing is that they made us clean—these 28 women—clean all the bathrooms of this palace where there were 3,000 men in. And the uh toilets didn't work very well, so you had to splash in, very difficult.

I: And you were there for three weeks?

B: No.

I: Oh.

B: We were there three days, and we had to carry this stuff out in buckets. And the bullets were going above our head, back and forth. And finally they piled us in a truck and took us to another, a police station, the second police station, where there were already a hundred people in there, in a room. The room was not bigger than what this whole thing is here with bathroom and everything. And you were sitting next to the other person, you know, back to back. There was no way to—you could lie down I think, but at night there were bed bugs. We had no beds but you had the bugs, and it was off the ceiling, so close to each other that it was black the ceiling. Well I don't do well with bed bugs, but there was a woman there, who had been the seamstress of my mother. She had a big shock. So she would give me—no food again—she would, they would bring her food for her from home and she would share it with me. I don't do well without food I have to tell you. And then after three days they took us and to Maxim. You know Maxim? But this is in Athens, Maxim, not Eferes <check location and spelling {289}. And it was a cabaret where people went to dance. It had a circular thing that you could dance on with little lights underneath, but it was basically dark. You know, very dark. Now the English used to feed us there, they brought some bread that was like, it was just a small piece of bread, but like cotton. White bread, exactly like cotton, and the meat that they gave was half a can of spam, which I used to cut in three so as to have breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Well we stayed three days. Then they took us to the student union. There we had <unintelligible {303}>. But I was so exhausted that I actually fainted in the bathroom. Uh, I had a cold, I had this, I had that. There came a woman, now saying all kinds of things that may be are unnecessary, but I thought were funny. There came a woman that had, that was moving--<tape cuts off {308}>

End of Tape 1, Side B {308}

Beginning of Tape 2, Side A {000}

B: Oh!

I: You're fainting in the bathroom-

B: Yes.

I: --and a woman came in.

B: There came a woman who was moving from one neighborhood to the other neighborhood. But because you could be arrested on the way, she was- had worn all her clothes one on top of the other. And at the bottom of all that she had a bathing suit. Then she was carrying two-gallon jugs of oil, and everybody there who was hungry fell on this oil, which they were eating with this white bread that

looked like cotton. I have not been able to put, you know how the Italian restaurants here offer you oil. I can't do that, put bread in oil. I am always reminded of this thing. So anyway then they took us, the last stop was in an apartment house, where we had more room. But by then we were many, many people, which we were keeping as hostages to exchange with, later, with others. Fortunately, after three weeks, one of my godfathers, I had two godfathers, became prime minister, and so they took me out of there. But it was very, very difficult to go back in to the city. So I went to out to a countr—to an aunt who was in the country.

I: Who was the uncle-or the godfather who became?

B: Sofianopoulos <check spelling {015}> Sofianopoulos.

I: Okay.

B: Then—well then things sort of became more normal in the spring of 1945, and I went back to the university, but this does not mean that it was quiet. One day, some guys, who were in medicine, studying medicine, came in and took me out and another uh girl and told us we couldn't come to the university. And so uh what could we do, we went to the park for a walk. There was no way to discuss it. I mean these were fanatic people.

I: They said that you couldn't go to the university, so you had to leave the university? What were their-what were their political beliefs? The ones who were—

B: I had been in prison, and so I had a name of being to the left, you see. So, my boyfriend had come out also of prison, fortunately. And we had a more normal life, let's say, from here on. And then um—but my parents were worried that they were saying that there was going to be a civil war. So I don't what they did, but I got an invitation from the University of Chicago to have scholarship and go to school there. And I didn't want to leave because of Nikos Monferatos, but they were so persistent and unhappy that I decided to do it. And I promised my friend that as soon I would get here that I would find a scholarship for him. So I came here, in New York, on the Fourth of February 1947. And um in New York, I stayed in New York about a week, because my parents, and especially my father, was—I mean he didn't want his children not to be educated. It was so important to him that I have a normal education that he want me to see New York, because I couldn't be in the United States without seeing New York. And there was a Greek who said that his wife was not at home, I doubt it. He didn't—they didn't want to entertain me at home. So, they gave me a room at a hotel that he owned, The Commodore Hotel. And a nephew of theirs showed me the town. I can't say that I was impressed as people think that you should be seeing New York. But I think it's mostly because I was not—I didn't understand. They were showing me lights. So what, I had seen lights. But

Broadway, I didn't understand what Broadway was. They took me to Harlem. I didn't understand what Harlem is. You see it takes a while for you to be acquainted with what is important in this country. And that takes very long. I can tell you that I really felt at home here after ten years.

I: <laughs>

B: It took ten years to be at home. Um-

I: So you went from New York to Chicago.

B: Yeah, I took the train, went to Chicago. I thought every time I walked out that I was in the same place. It didn't change at all. <laughs> But I finally got to Chicago, and the people who had done the affidavit of support were wonderful people. Um—Came, got me from the train station, took me home to their home. But they had arranged in their own thinking, in an American way thinking that I shouldn't live uh I should be at the university. That's true, because they lived in northern part of Chicago, and that was far for going back and forth. But instead of taking a room at the boarding houses, they rented a room, just a room in a house. I was so lonely in there. Maybe it was cheaper, you see, than being at the university.

I: How did you know these people? How did your parents know these people?

B: How—We didn't know them.

I: Oh.

B: They had a cousin in Greece, and they had heard a lot about my parents. My mother was a very active person. Somebody here asked me, "Were you an immigrant?" "No, I wasn't an immigrant." So he said, "what was your mother?" I said, "My mother was an activist." <laughs> What could I tell him? I was talking of course activist against the Germans. But still she was you know she was involved.

I: So they had heard of your parents.

B: Yes.

I: And offered to help.

B: Yes, and it was expensive for them, because they were paying $15 a week. Now $15 today is not much, but in '47 it was and for a person you don't know. After, I was able, at the time that I went to school in Chicago; at the beginning there was Hutchins, who was a great, great president of the University of Chicago. So he had his own ideas about education. He didn't

insist on the four-year college, he thought that if you could pass exams you could go on. So I had to take exams in an enormous gymnasium, the Bartlett Gymnasium, with a thousand other people. These were all objective tests, which I had a hard time finishing, because they were too long for me. But I did pass the math and the humanities. I was not able to pass social sciences, because I didn't know American history. And physics and biology were difficult because of the terms were difficult in another language. But I had a very good education from this German school, really good. So I finished the Bachelors in two years, and then I did a three-year Masters.

I: So what was your Bachelor's degree in? What did you study?

B: There's no differentiation, I just continued, you see, and I was studying art history. Well, actually not like that. I started by going to the Oriental Institute. The Oriental Institute is an excellent place in the University of Chicago. It has—it does archaeology of the Middle East. And I also went to the School of Archaeology at the University of Chicago. I must say I couldn't study at the Oriental Institute. It was all too difficult for me, and I had no interest in going to Mesopotamia. Right now it would be in Iraq. So, <laughs> I'm very glad I have no inclination for that. Um So I finally went to the Art History Department, the Art Department at the University of Chicago, and I also was studying in the archaeology section. It was good that I finished the three years, but I'll tell you where the difficulty comes in. All, this past academics, when you're studying, you really should do all your work at one university, not chop it up and go to more than one, because you have different professors and takes you a while to adjust. So when I left the University of Chicago, I couldn't continue because I went to Detroit, my husband had a job in Detroit. I'll go back to that. And uh I couldn't, they didn't have a PhD in Detroit. I came later, back here, and I went to the University in Berkeley, but I didn't know the teachers. And so, I was taking seminars only to acquaint myself with the teachers, 'cause actually I didn't need the courses or the units.

I: Mh-hm.

B: Now we've got a lot to catch up with. Uh.

I: Mh-hm. I was going to ask, before we go much further, your siblings left Athens at the same that you did. <Talking overlaps {115}> Your brother and sister.

B: <Talking overlaps {115}> My brother and sister.

I: Yeah.

B: They left in November. I had left in February, but um it was completely different story there. My parents just insisted that they should, and its true that let's say a couple of months later, it was pertinent. It was impossible to have stayed in Greece.

I: So your parents knew that this was-that the civil war was coming.

B: Yes, yes.

I: And they wanted all of you to leave the country.

B: Mh-hm.

I: And your sister went to-

B: Paris, to the école, to the Saint Germain en Laye, which is a very good school outside Paris. Um she complains now that it was school for rich kids, but as one of those things. And my brother went to a school in the southern part of Paris, at So and in a school called La Canalle, which was a school that already, Rabelais—you don't who Rabelais is. Oh, you know! Huh, okay—had gone to school there. It was that old. Either it was Rensare <check spelling {129}> or Rabelais. Anyway. But a very good school. But he suffered from different, other things. That is when you—a young mans leaves like that, he was lonely and he is affectionate. So there was a priest that was not, I mean this is a public school, it wasn't a private school, but the priest used to come around for the Catholic kids. And he got very close to the priest, who was Jesuit, because he would pay attention to him and would talk to him. And after a little while, he wanted to become a priest. It was for my parents, a calamity. They really—fortunately he was uh saved. <Laughs> In another way, the Jesuit say.

I: That would be—I can imagine that would be traumatic for an Orthodox family to have.

B: And because, not very many people know, the Greeks are very hesitant or very—They don't—They've never had very good relationships with the Catholics. They had better relationships with the Turks, than they had with the Catholics when they would--. Because the Catholics, let's say the Venetians, insisted on pushing their own religion. The Turks couldn't care less what you were.

I: So when you came to the University of Chicago, did you think that you were going to stay in America? I know that you divide your time between countries.

B: Yes.

I: But-

B: No. What I felt was that I really had a hard time understanding the Greek-Americans. So much so that I said the awful things. They invited me at the meeting to talk to them as a Greek, and they asked me questions and so on. And it was one series of errors. I told them that "I don't understand. Why you insist that your children should marry Greeks." A Greek to hear that is something unimaginable. They almost sent me back. They had paid for my trip, but they were ready to send me back. I said, "Why? If the reason you like a person is because you have things in common. Alright maybe you have more in common with a Greek, but you don't necessarily have more in common. It depends." So I don't follow that, because I grew up thinking that the world is mine and that if I meet a person I like very much, who's not a Greek, makes no difference. But that's the way I grew up. And they were raised very differently. So-

I: But your husband was Greek?

B: My husband was Greek. But I didn't make that effort. I just met him.

I: And did you meet him at the university?

B: Yeah. I met him about a year after I had come. And I was so lonely. Oh. But someone in New York where they had done an interview for me, said to me, "You know, there's a young man at the University of Chicago. You have so much in common, you should look him up." But, because I was in love with the other guy, I didn't look him up. And a year past, and one day I decided, "I am too lonely, I'm going to call him." So, I called and he was so excited, and, "I know about your father," and this and that, "And come over to the International House were I am." And we meet. So I went. And I was waiting in the lobby, and I could see some young man coming towards the lobby, but every few minutes he would stop and talk to somebody. So when he arrived, I said, "Oh boy, do I pity the person who's going to marry you. She'll be waiting all her life." <laughs> How should I know. We had so much in common, we were able to laugh hours, hours. You know because he was—had nice humor. And uh it was the best thing, even though it was very nasty what I did to the other guy. But the circumstance was such that I couldn't go back to Greece.

I: But your parents stayed in Greece?

B: Now your opening another subject that's very long. And I guess I should talk about, but I don't know how long you want to stay.

I: Well, maybe we can talk about that next time.

B: It's long.

I: Okay. We'll talk about the—

B: My mother was four years in prison in Greece.

I: Oh my goodness.

B: <laughs> I tell you its four years that you've got to hear about.

I: Yeah. Okay, let's talk—I'm going to put that on my list to discuss next time.

B: I'm glad that you're not shocked.

I: No, I'm not shocked--<tape cuts off {190}>

End of Tape 2, Side A. {190}
End of First Interview

Tape: P2

Subject: Beata Panagopoulos
Third Party:
Interviewer: Julie Armin
Date of Interview: March 13, 2004

Transcriber: Nicole Fernandez
Date of Transcription: October 1, 2014-December 17, 2014

Tape 1, Side A {000}

I: This is Julie Armin, and I'm here with Beata Panogopoulos. It is Saturday March the 13th, 2004. And last time we spoke, Beata, you mentioned that while you were at the University of Chicago, your mother was imprisoned for four years. Do you want to talk a little bit about that?

B: Yes, a little bit.

I: Okay.

B: Actually, we ma—as soon as my brother and sister had left from Greece, that's when it all happened. It's very difficult to explain it to a person in the United States, because you don't so much a history of political prisoners. In my mother's case, it was completely political. And it was so much for her, as it was a way to do something in way to do something to my father, whom they couldn't touch otherwise. The other problem is when you an upheaval in a country, people are inclined to go and say nasty things about you, which aren't true. But which are not checked by the government, the authority, whichever it is. Here it was a not the government, but a—what in the Wild West were the—what do you call them?

I: An outlaw?

B: Not outlaw, but those who were taking judgment in their hands.

I: Oh, vigilantes!

B: Yes, vigilantes. It wasn't something that the government wanted to condone, and my mother was arrested when she tried to ask another person to a place, because we had had a lot of crystals. We had had these, other things like that. So she wanted to sell them to a store that was selling crystals. And she met some woman in a milk dairy restaurant. The lady liked men very much, she came with a Russian white Russian. Who was gone from Russia long time before, he left in 1917. But they used it, they pretend that this was something antigovernment. Anyway she stayed four years. It was very hard because they condemned her to death. And they also even though my father made all the efforts possible to acquit her, but they didn't take her out of prison immediately. So they kept her and every now and again they would take her out to kill her, but they weren't going to do it. But they pretended they were going to, which was very hard on morale. Then in the prison it is really interesting that there were babies who were born there, because mothers had been arrested when they were pregnant. And so many of these things, and it takes too long to discuss, but she finally was out in four years later. Uhh, I don't know how to count, let's see. '48 to '52.

I: Oh, wow! That must have been very hard on your family.

B: It was terribly hard on my father who had no place to stay, because he had to rent the apartment to Americans. And he didn't take anything out, which means a lot of things were lost. And he had absolutely nowhere to go, because no one is willing to keep you for four years. Finally, he ended up at an aunt of mine who lived in a suburb. And it was the only way, but it was far the suburb and he had to come down for all kinds of business. And he wasn't terribly young. He was born in '78, and I think this was now '48.

I: Oh, wow! So 1878.

B: Yeah. Yes, 1878. So anyways, but I fortunately I also my boyfriend was taken to a concentration camp for other reasons completely. A terrible place called Makronisos. And even though his father was a general he stayed there a couple of years, but later he was able to go to England to study. I had to tell him that we had to break up because I didn't see any future. So by the way this giant young man was executed by the terrorists we had by the 17th of November, in '85. Greece has had very hard things happening to her.

I: So he was executed. Why was he sent to the concentration camp to begin with?

B: Because if you had been imprisoned by the Germans, which he was. Automatically, were suspicious. So they wouldn't put him into the regular army. Instead they sent him to Makronisos. And the stories from Makronisos are innumerable that were known because they were so horrible. Then they came out but he turned to the right because he had suffered as much. And he was editor or proprietor of a rightest paper, called Apogeumatini <check spelling {073}>. And uh--

I: How is that spelled?

B: A-PO-GEU-MA-TI-NI.

I: Okay.

B: It means, afternoon paper. Yeah.

I: Okay.

B: And why, nobody knows, there has been these people that killed him. Had were-sentenced, and if not sentenced they were tried. I'm not in Greece, and I don't remember or know. It was just a year ago it happened that the trial took place. And uh I don't know exactly the outcome of it. So, uh, we don't

know exactly who these people were. They were terrorists, to the left or to the right.

Okay, well my story in particular. Uh-I had to write to this guy that, you know, we are breaking up and I fell in love with Nondas, was my husband. And we decided that we did want to get married. The trouble with getting married was—there was problem that we had come to the United States with a Student Visa, and when you come with a Student Visa, you really are not—you don't automatically have a permanent. So we tried for a while, but it was very difficult. And finally we went to a lawyer and he said to go out of the country—ah in the meantime we had a child. We got married and had a child, Peter. That simplified things a little bit. It was not openly said that if you have a child that you have to stay and protect the child. You—without it being official, they didn't really touch you as easily. So-

I: When did you get married?

B: In 1949, in December, and we had a wedding first in the Civic Hall in Chicago. But we invited a few people that we were very close to us. And then we went to Tarpon Springs, in Florida, during the Christmas vacation because everybody in Florida, in Tarpon Springs was Greek. Everybody, even the policemen spoke Greek. So we decided to go and have church wedding there. Then we had a very nice honeymoon. We had gone with friends who had also just got married. And we made the whole round of Florida. And we had barbeques. We would go fishing first and then cooked the fish on the beach, some very nice groupers, which is a very nice fish. When were two-thirds around Florida, we went in New Smyrna. Now my husband had heard of New Smyrna at the time, and knew that there had been Greeks there. So we wanted to look around and see. There were so many mosquitos that we couldn't stay too long. They would pile up on my legs—I had shorts on—I had to hit them with both hands to be able to you know get rid of them. From there, the reason I mention that is Nondas later wrote a book on new Smyrna. And those Greeks who had came in the 18th century, whose names still sort of exist in Florida um were all killed by alligators and mosquitos that sucked their blood. Um-

I: So that actually brings me to another question. You met your husband at the university of Chicago.

B: Yes.

I: What was he studying there?

B: He was studying American History, and he had already two degrees in Greece. He had a law degree, and he had even practiced law. But my

husband's history is a very long one, and a very exciting if you want but that can't fit in there.

I: Sure.

B: Then he had a degree in political science, and also had gone for the length of four years to—in, studied philosophy. He studied. The reason he took those other courses in philosophy after the war—sorry—during the war is because in 1940, when the Italians attacked Greece, he went to the army like most young people went. And he was wounded, very seriously the bullet when so close to the heart, that it scratched it. And he stayed for about a year at home or at a hospital. And after he couldn't really work so he went back to school. But he wanted to take here a Ph.D. in American History, 'cause he couldn't use law here in the United States, because law is a different subject or treated differently than in Greece for we still have remnants of Byzantine law. And uh well then he couldn't—political science, he couldn't use this to work. So, he took American History.

I: That's how he became interested in New Smyrna. Was he interested in Greek Americans in particular?

B: No, he wasn't. He was interested in Greek-American—in American History and in Greek History in the United States, because every Greek is. It is a natural thing. Of course it's very <unintelligible {143}>, and most likely to want it. But he was very excited that there had been Greeks that came that early in the 18th century.

I: Can I ask you just about a couple more questions about him? Where did he grow up in Greece?

B: He grew up in Athens. However, that's not quite correct. The reason is that his father was a forester. He was working for the government but in forest—for the forest. Today it would be under environmental uses. It was government project, so he had to move often. He didn't stay in one place. Nondas had lived in Corfu, lived in Patra. He went to school in those places and he had great many, many experiences. He had worked at the time when Greece had—see he was ten years older than I—but at the time we had dictator in Greece, he also worked in some camps for children and they were very successful. So a man called Homer David—Homer Davis who was president of the American college in Greece—it was not a college but a very very successful. It still exists, and it has produced some of the better people, like Papandreou and so on they all went to school there. So Homer Davis saw Nondas teaching at those camps and he took him to this American school, and he worked there for about three years before he was able to come to the United States. You want a little more, just a little more about him?

I: Sure.

B: When he came to the United States, what happened to him was a very usual thing in those years. The people who paid for his trip over were people who had children—public children let's say—that had to spend time in Greece, who didn't have enough time to get out early enough. So they had asked Nondas to please take care of them, they had been going to school in the American college. So Nondas did that and as a thank you, they offered to take him to the United States. When he arrived in the United States, they put in one of the very good hotels and they invited him to dinner that evening at home and he went. And the next day, these two brothers came to see him and they said, "How'd you—ah—enjoyed yourself last night?" And Nondas said, "Oh yes, of course, very much." "Did you notice a young girl who was there, who is our neice?"Nondas said, "Yes." "Isn't she nice?" So, Nondas said, "Oh yes, of course, very nice." "ah, we make a proposition to you. You marry her, we will take care of all of your expenses as long as you want to study. Or you could work with us." So, Nondas said in a very diplomatic way, "I am very honored of the proposition but you know, I am much older than she is and we wouldn't have anything in common to talk about. So, I must refuse." They said, "Well, too bad," and they disappeared. Next day, the hotel manager came and said, "You know, it's all paid until right this minute, from here on it's up to you." And he didn't have any money, and he left from Chicago to go to the University of Chicago, went to the dean of the international house and told him the story, and the guy said, "I'll tell you what we can do. I have a room—not a good room because it's next to the elevator—but if you work in the cafeteria and you can pay for that room, you can also eat in the cafeteria. And then you make an application for a scholarship and you'll get it—for a fellowship, you'll get it." And that's how it worked out for him.

I: All right.

B: So.

I: It's a great story. And so we <clears throat> we started talking about—

B: the marriage—

I: And your child—your first child, Peter, and so he helped you get your citizenship.

B: And was born under strange circumstances. Because his mother had never heard anything about babies being born, she didn't know there was a water bag. So <laughs> when that broke, she didn't have the faintest idea what happened. So, she walked around a whole day with that broken water bag <laughs>, and when I went to <unintelligible {210}>, which is the hospital near the University of Chicago. They wanted to get me in right away. "I can't

do that because I have my wash out, and I also have not gone to the bank. I'll come back later." They were curious with me. Then I called my husband, and he called his brother who had come from Greece, "That she's crazy. You've got to talk a taxi and go right away." I did that and they wouldn't take me in, but my brother-in-law came so they took me. Peter was born very soon right after. He had been walking around with me all day. <laughs>

I: <laughs> What year was this?

B: He was born 1950.

I: Okay. And so, when you um got your citizenship—when you applied for it, can you talk about that?

B: Well the citizenship was not very difficult but you have to wait five years. First you wait in residence, and you have a green card that you know from films and so afterwards it was easy. In the meantime, you can't leave the country. This was difficult. So, I—when I first saw again my parents was ten years afterwards from when I left, you see. And for my mother, it was tragic, you know. Um so, in 1952, Nondas finished his Ph. D., and I was ready to finish my Masters, he got a job at Wayne University—now it's called Wayne State—at the time it was Wayne University in Detroit. That was a great luck, because at the same time, in '52, the veterans that had taken a free education and were all graduating. So there were in round numbers. Something like 800 Masters degrees and 400 Ph. D. degrees looking for jobs. The reason he was a good student at University of Chicago and he had some professors were very fond of him. So there was one, Walter Johnson who had big relations with the Democratic Party and he heard about this job at Wayne, so we went. We had a car that was the same car that my family had in 1935. It was 1935 Ford, but a bit older now, you see. So, Nondas drove it with all our stuff to Detroit, and Peter and I went on the plane.

<tape cuts off {252}>
End of Tape 1, Side A

Beginning of Tape 1, Side B
{000}

I: —You took a plane.

B: We took a plane, and arrived in Detroit, and the house that—I think I said that before—that my husband rented—had rented was on Marx Street. And nobody in Greece new there was a Marx who was the mayor of Detroit. So, they all thought it was Karl Marx, and they wouldn't write to us because they thought it would be dangerous. <laughs> Anyway, Peter was quite a lively kid. Once when he was younger—the previous year—he had drank a whole

bottle of China ink. Another time, I found him hanging from the third floor of an almost rotten—um we had for mosquitos, you know those screens, a screen—but fortunately I grabbed him before he went down. So, he needed a lot of attention and I couldn't go back to working on a Ph. D., plus you couldn't get a—there was no university in Detroit that would give a Ph. D. in Art History. In Chicago, I had a teacher of medieval manuscripts painting who was very negative because when I went to tell her, you know, now that I am finishing my masters, I would like to study for my Ph. D. and she said, "Oh no, don't do that. Since you have a child and a husband, you don't need to go to school. You just need to write on your own." And she was an old maid, as they used say, a person who had difficulties as a professor who didn't get to the top because men were more easily at the top. So, she had—this was very bad advice that she gave me. With that advice and the difficulty of raising a child where I knew nobody, I decided to not do anything for the beginning. Then we moved near the Fort Hospital, which was about a good neighborhood and not good.

I: This was in Michigan?

B: Michigan. Detroit. Because it was near the Fort Hospital, it had all doctors who were doing their residence-ship. Otherwise it was lower class middle—uh lower middle class residence, and their my daughter was born, Beata—also called Beata.

I: When was that?

B: In uh 1953, the fall—no, the December of '53. So, that's very important because you can't go to school you see, uh you lose a year. So she went later on to a private school to not lose that year. Uh so, something very difficult happened when Beata was born. We went—we were used to having a vacation in the summer—so when we didn't have money, and other teachers would take their children and go camping. So, we decided to do the same thing, and we went to a camp ground where they gave you a big tent and a platform of wood. But you know lakes have mosquitos, and so they would spray for mosquitos. Now, Beata was about six months old—because it was June—and she was crawling around, and I don't know what she did—because then I was not very aware of what little children do. So um she must have either put her hands on the deck that was sprayed or picked up something that had been sprayed and spoiled it, but she got poisoning. We had to go back to Detroit naturally. Such terrible poisoning, the whole summer we suffered from that, and we thought she wouldn't uh manage to survive. So, the doctor told us that she should be in a different climate, because as soon as the winter came, and I was trying to go and pick up Peter from school, I would run to her in the carriage and still she would get ear aches and aches of throat, everything. And uh, so Nondas started looking for a job. And because this so funny, I will narrate to you, about four years after

we were—in the third year we were in Detroit, Nondas had heard from others that there was a president interviewing for a university—it was not a university at the time, it was a college—for a college of San Jose State College. So, they all looked for where is San Jose. Nobody knew where San Jose could be, but they finally found a map and found that it was on the 38th parallel. So, Nondas said, "Well, must be pretty good, because Athens is on the 38th parallel." So he went to see the president who was called Walt West, who is interviewing these people all together, not each one separately. They were all seated in a circle and came one at a time to talk to him. So, his questions were, "Why you want to go to San Jose?" My husband said, "I can't tell you that, I don't know where San Jose is. I have no idea, but it's on the 38th parallel, my uh—I mean Athens is there too. So, I thought it would be a good place." He said, "Oh yes, if you are happy, you will be a good teacher." The second question was, "Are you religious?" Which is never asked in the United States, but he was a Mormon, and he said, "Well, you know, we don't want any atheists." And Nondas said, "Well, I have my membership card of the church, because we just baptized our daughter." <laughs> And the third question was, "Do you like to teach teachers?" And Nondas said, "Well, I'll tell you I have very mixed feelings because I have just taught a class with teachers and they're so stiff and I can't answer it." But Walt went to the University of Chicago and they gave him good recommendations. However, I have a suspicion that there was another reason. The univ—I mean San Jose State has football group called the Spartans and Walt had not known there had been a war in Antiquity between Athens and the Spartans. <laughs> So, he thought, "here's a good man for us." So, the next year when we arrived at San Jose State, San Jose was—it was celebrating its hundredth anniversary and the sister city of San Jose was Sparta. So, they had a celebration in the city <unintelligible {083}> and so on. You see, the university was, before everything else, was a normal school for teachers. So, that's why it's a hundred years old. So then, the mayor of Sparta came and they put him on the stage and he had to give a shield that he had brought with him from Sparta to Nondas since he was Greek. You see that was very much better. So the mayor told him, put your shoulders under the shield, it's very, very heavy, and Nondas did that. Then he had to give it to the young girl who was the queen of the football, and he told her put your shoulder underneath. But she was a tiny little thing and she fell with the shield on top of her. <laughs> That's the story.

I: So this was—when you arrived—the year you arrived in California, what year was that?

B: In 1956, and of course, we had never lived in such a small town, which was a town primarily beautiful because of the orchards. But there was no where to rent a house because these people were farmers, and also, these the tract homes had just begun. So, we had to buy a tract home, but what we were not veterans of this country. So, we didn't get the breaks for a house for, you

know, finance. But we did buy one for a thousand dollars, and we moved in with nothing, because we couldn't take them from the company that brought them over because we didn't have money. So, we had to live in an empty house with my mother-in-law who had arrived in Detroit and who had taken the trip with us. And we gave her a rollaway bed that someone left us, but we were all sleeping on the floor and eating on the floor. With plastic forks and spoons. But eventually we did have the money to get our furniture out. And we lived in this house, which we expanded and so on until 1967.

I: And this was in San Jose?

B: '56. Yes. Not San Jose, Santa Clara, among the orchards with lots of funny things happened, like when our son got to be fourteen or fifteen. He wanted to be like the others and stay at night—I mean stay late. And we were not wiling to let and h was fifteen-sixteen. So, one day didn't come home in the evening and we were terrified, terrified. And he went camping in the orchard across form us, but we didn't know and we went all over, San Francisco, everywhere to find him. And the worst thing he did was that he was with a friend, and they had—ah on another night, he started the car—he didn't drive yet, his friend was driving—by uniting the electrical, you know.

I: Hot-wired.

B: They didn't enough money to pay—the pay, what you pay as you return, you know.

I: The bridge?

B: The bridge.

I: The bridge toll.

B: They had gone over the Golden Gate Bridge but had no money to return. So what they decide to do is go through the Richmond Bridge without stopping and at that night from San Quintin, someone had escaped. They were ready to fire when someone had said the one who escaped were black people and these are white, so they're not the same. But we received a letter from the judge pretty soon saying we had to appear—he had to appear in court, Peter. And uh—

I: So, how did you have time to work? You were working when you were living in San Jose—

B: Not yet.

I: Oh, okay.

B: I didn't work 'til, until Peter was eight years old. And I was working, yeah. Yeah. I'll tell you how I was working. So, anyway they didn't give him—I mean they didn't write down that he had been apprehended and so, because the judge said that his daughter was continuously around the stores.

I: So, he felt sympathy.

B: Well, you asked me how I was working. As soon as we came to San Jose, I saw I couldn't with a Masters get a job. In San Jose State had nepotism at the time, so I couldn't work at the same place. So, I decided to get a credential to be able to teach, and um I did. I took courses for the credential in French—I mean I was going to teach French, I was going to teach Art. And I worked in the high school—for the high school, Fremont High School in Sunnyvale for six years. And then when I got my sabbatical, I decided to start on my Ph. D. So, wrong—I started on the Ph. D. before that, but I started teaching and I was going to school at Stanford, which was not too hard except there were no high ways at the time. We had to go through the back roads. So, it took ages to go from Santa Clara to Stanford. And then the supervisor—the advisor could not stay at Stanford because the rule was that if you finished Stanford, you could not teach there, be employed there. So, she had left and went to Tucson. And we were roaming around without an advisor and it was too expensive to do that. So, I decided to go to Berkeley because Art History—there was no Ph. D. in Art History at Stanford. So, I had to go to Berkeley without a freeway and that was taking much too long, but I had to do it. The courses I had taken at Chicago, they were very good because I had many more. I didn't have to take courses, units, but I had to take seminars to get to know the teachers that would eventually give me the tests. So, it was very hard.

I: Did you do that while you were working?

B: I was teaching at the high school, but I was also teaching nights—certain nights when I didn't go to Berkeley—Art History because I thought that would be valuable. So, altogether, I worked a lot to say the least, and my children ate a lot of uh T.V. dinners and uh—

I: —So. Sorry, I was just going to ask what was your dissertation about?

B: My dissertation was about monastic orders, but Western monastic orders in Greece. Now for you understand that you have to know a little bit more that I wasn't able to find work on Byzantine art, because that was non-existence at the time except Princeton and let's say you were on the East Coast. But on the West Coast, you could not study Byzantine Art, and that was what I knew. So, I want—I had um let's say finished or had uh—what's the word—I was qualified, let's say, for Western um Gothic, let's say, art. Actually, architecture was what I was studying, and that's what I had gotten—was getting my

degree in, Gothic of the 13th in Architecture in the West. I did—they didn't know very much about that at Berkeley even, my advisors and so on. So, I decided to go to Paris to some of my studies and write my dissertation and uh I did that for two years. And then I got my Ph. D., not from Berkeley, but from the Sorbonne.

I: So, you took your family with you for two years?

B: Well, I took—we took Beata and Nondas had a sabbatical for a year. The other he went to a French school called the Seine. Peter went to England. Now he wouldn't have had to go, but he was a student at Reed College. Reed College was not like nowadays. This was the year of the drugs, and especially LSD was rampant. So, we were very afraid to leave him behind. He finished high school a year earlier than other kids, and finished and got his degree at seventeen. Then after England he returned to Reed, and uh I got my degree and in 1968. Then, uh I taught a year at San Jose State, but uh the Art Department had a woman at the time who was—who took advantage of the strikes that San Jose State had, because the person who was the presi—the head of the department was out in the street, you know, uh what you call the—

I: Picketting?

B: So, she took advantage of that was, let's say, head of the department, not real head of the department. So, she wanted herself to be known in the country. So, she would go to a lot um meetings and so on. And she felt well, I asked her fi I could continue to teach at uh, 'cause I had taught Greek, Ancient Greek Art, and she said, "Well, I don't have to hire you, because I have the whole country I could hire from." That's what she answered. I went to the Art Department, and a person who afterwards became a friend of mine told me, "Well, I'll tell you the truth. You are a woman, and I'm not going to hire a woman if I can hire a man, because a woman doesn't need the job. A man needs it because he has a family." It was tough, and I started—I left the high school, had to the two years that you need to work two more years, but I paid them back and left. And San Jose State at the time had a new program called New College, it was named after New College in Cambridge, in England. However, there wasn't much similarity, the only thing was that the students who couldn't make in the regular, there were actually a uh fresh air, a breath of fresh air, you know, because they were completely free if you want. All kinds of things happened there.

I: Did you teach there?

B: I taught there.

I: Ah! Okay, so—

B: I taught for about three, four years until they dismantled it. The main thing was that I was also teaching for the Humanities and in the Art Department. But I didn't have a permanent job in the Art Department, but altogether is was a hundred percent the teaching, but it was scattered. So, after that, and I continued to teach at Foothill, because we needed the money if we were going to be traveling. I got a very pleasant situation, because they asked me to interview—to submit an application for a class professorship, you know class uh the—can't say <unintelligible {250}> but it was an endowment and it was, you know, it would be paid by class foundation. So, the—all the archaeological excavations and everything were done by um the American School of Classical Studies. The American School of Classical Studies has a—there is a library, let's say, called the Gennadian Library <Gennadius Library {258}>, which is a <unintelligible> and that is in trust of the American School. That is that they cannot take the books and walk out. They are not—it's not theirs. They are taking care of it, and that's a wonderful thing. So, I was asked to be director of the library, and I stayed four years, which was more than San Jose State was giving to me permission to say, but anyway, they give you three years, but who—But I managed and it was a marvelous time. This library has books from the first printing of Homer, the first printing of Aristotle, the first printing of any of these great people.

I: And where is this library located?

B: The library is in Athens, and that's where I live now. Not in that library, but on the street next to it. And they gave me a house on the campus. It's like a big garden on which is—was the house of director of the American School and the director of the Gennadius. So, I lived in this marble, which on the inside is more like an American house, and I enjoyed it. I can't tell you it was—

I: Was your family with you?

B: Yes.

I: Wow.

B: Well, I mean they weren't. They were big by then. I mean Pete—Nondas stayed the next four months, even though he had retired, but there is <unintelligible {280}>, which means that you go back if you want and teach for another five years. And this money is on top of your retirement. We had become greed—greedy you see. So, he worked four months, then he would come to Gennadi, and there, he teached the kids Greek. But I taught also, I wasn't just director. I went on excavations with them. I went on field trips, and I taught my field, which was Medieval Architecture in Greece during the time of the Monastic Orders, when they had come to Greece. And um.

I: So, what years were you the director of the library?

B: It was from1982 to 1986.

I: Okay, and that actually leads me to ask when did you write your book? When did you flesh out your dissertation to make a book?

B: It was printed in 1979 by the University of Chicago, and I—when I gave it to them it was 1970. So, it took a long time for them to print it. It is called—

<tape cuts off {301}>
End of Tape 1, Side B

Beginning of Tape 2, Side A
{000}

B: The book was Cistercian and Mendicant Monasteries in Medieval Greece. It's not exactly my dissertation, but it is similar to my—I mean there's a lot from my dissertation that's in here. And um.

I: Did you need to add quite a bit of it once you finished your dissertation in order to get the book published? Did you add—

B: Well, it takes at least a year for them to send it back and forth to you and do certain corrections and so on. Yeah.

I: So you decided upon this topic, because there was an expert at Berkeley who you could work with?

B: Unfortunately that's where there wasn't.

I: Ah

B: But when I was at the University of Chicago, I had—there were a lot of German scholars who had left because of Hitler. And one of them was Ulderwich Littledog. Now, Littledog had gone to Greece in the thirties, and he had seen some—he had seen fortresses, but he knew, what the Greeks called Frankish, which sums up all the Western people who took part in the Crusades and who had left remnants in Greece. And he had told me that I should sometime go into this. So, I actually I wrote my dissert—not my dissertation—my thesis or my masters on the fortresses. So, I knew something about this. Then at Berkeley, I had a marvelous professor, who died unfortunately, Bonnet was his name and he was talking—was very interested in the Cistercians and Monastic orders. So, I had taken seminars with him and they didn't speak of Greece, because most of Greek buildings had suffered a lot. There were for instance twelve monastic orders—oh no—

twelve monastic houses of Cistercians in Greece and Constantinople until, let's say, the, until probably the Turks came in. Anyway, they were destroyed by earthquakes and occupations and so on. So, I had a hard time finding these places, and the ones I talk about are the ones that we still have some ruins from. And it's interesting because the Cistercians were monastic order, a monastic order that first of all was helped by the pope who wanted to unite the Greek Orthodox and the Catholic Church. Of course, under him, and the Greeks were not willing, at least the Byzantines did not want to do that. And they still—still today you can find that it is that the Greeks dislike Catholics more than they dislike the Turks, because the Turks didn't bother the religion. They assumed that they were different people in the Ottoman Empire and that they had arrived to have their own religion. What they didn't like is when these different people did anything that would shake up the empire, the Ottoman Empire. But the religion wasn't that fighting except when the Greeks started understanding that they could be free of they wanted to be free and so on. Then of course the religion also suffered.

I: That brings me to another question that I wanted to ask you. How has the Orthodox Church functioned in your life? I don't know if you are religious.

B: Well, I was raised going to all churches, because I grew up with governesses. Either I had governess or my brother or sister had a governess. Um they went to their own church and I went along. And my parents weren't worried about it, because in Greece you have religion in the schools. So, you are taught that, that your parents don't have to take part in it. In another country, like here, where the religion is separate from the government, some parents want their children to be like them if they are religious. But my parents had no problem, and um I had the advantage of having gone to a Catholic school, to a Lutheran school, and I'm talking about church, and yeah, also to the Anglican Church which is in Athens. And it's very good to have that, not to be biased. I like the byzantine church, because it is—it doesn't <unintelligible {058}> like the Catholic does. I also think that uh it is—there is a beauty to it. I dislike the things that are done here in the church. One, I cannot accept the English. I understand why, it's not that I don't understand that since the Greeks came here, they married. At first they intermarried only, you know, all Greeks, and if someone wasn't Greek, it was a great big problem. But nowadays, they married anyone. So, if the other person is religious and uh is not Greek Orthodox, it becomes a problem. Other people that they are marrying are used to understanding what's said in church. We went to church and never understood a word, because it was Alexandrian Greek or it was—we went to church for the atmosphere, or they took us to church, but we didn't have to understand. And today, to tell you the truth, I am more, I have more of a religious sense if I go in Greece to a very tiny church where there is no priest or nothing said, that with to myself. Then I am in these big churches where there is source for a lot of social push. They want to see each other that's why they go. <clears throat>

I: Okay.

B: I don't even believe in the—I mean let's say there is what they call a "Philotopos." Philotopos is the love of the poor, they say. There is a committee called the Philotopos, the trouble is that there are no poor. So, these people do other things not related.

I: So, these are—it's an organization affiliated with the church, and—

B: They're like organizations, and <unintelligible {081}> and this and that. I don't belong to anything, nor will I ever belong to anything.

I: I um that interests me in how you feel your Greek heritage distinguishes you in some way during your interactions with people. How were you treated at the University of Chicago as someone from Greece? Have you always had a sense of your Greekness?

B: I have always had a sense of my Greekness and I impose it on the others by talking about it all the time. But people at the University of Chicago, I think the students, I don't remember if it was the students or the teachers were very, very broadminded. And so, I had—nobody would ask me what I was. They gave me a card to fill it in case something might happen to you if you need a priest. But that's how far they went, I never asked for anyone. So, I was—I went to church Easter is a very important, let's say, holiday and event in Greece and in the Greek Church. So, I went to the Greek Church the first year that I was there, and I was horrified at the hats they were wearing was in fashion at the time, 'cause we hold candles, and with the candles there's at least couple of hats that catch fire. Then, what also bothered me terrible was that they were taking out a tray and asking for money loud at the time of the liturgy. I thought this was shocking because of course in Greece, the priest is not paid by the community, he is paid like a civil servant. And you give something when he—it's not a rule—you give him something if you baptize a child or get married. Here, the priest is rich, has regular salary from the community. Maybe he's not rich, but he is independent. He has his home and everything. So, I couldn't understand this. They want to build of course churches. Not a bad idea. What is important is to build schools where teach Greek. Because when they don't know Greek or the history of Greece, how do they expect their children—because they want their children to continue to be Greeks—they can't, it can't be done.

I: So, that's something you think is important, a tradition that you think is important to make.

B: I think if—I mean my children are Americans, I understand that and I wouldn't fight it, because they have to have a country. You cannot deprive

them of their country. But my children love Greece. They've gone to Greece every year or most of their life, except a few times that they didn't, and I hope that they will continue to feel that way about Greece. Because it is a good country, it has all Greek problems of civil war and so on, but in general it is a good country. And um—

I: So, you think Greek-American parents or the church should do more to teach Greek-Americans the language and history.

B: There is problem that, in some cases, the priest prefer to have Catechism than a Greek Church. That is competition you understand. But for me a religious teaching is less important, 'cause that's an individual thing, than it is to teach a language. Without the language you cannot have this—I mean there are lots of Greek kids now, who go to Greece, but they don't know a word of Greek. Well, you can't do it that way it doesn't work. They are farmers, then they are upset, because the Greeks don't pay much attention to them. And because they kid them the way they speak. See, I was going through customs, or rather leaving the country, and some policeman thought he was smart. So, he said to me, in distorted Greek, that Greece is a good country. He said, "Oraio tou Elata." <Greek {132}> that's completely wrong Greek. And I said to him, "Don't you ever say that to me again. You know very well it not that way. It is 'Oraio einnai Eladda." <Greek {137}> Didn't say another word to me, because he was kidding me and because he was imitating Greek-Americans in that. It's not their fault, it is—they had done an awful lot with the abilities they had and what they knew and what they were able to learn. And I admire them, because they had stayed partly Greek, partly.

I: Well, what traditions did you pass down to your children?

B: I talk about all the time, how can they avoid it. <laughs> They can't.

I: Do they speak Greek?

B: Yeah.

I: Ah.

B: But my—this is the important thing, my son taught his son Greek and he took him to Greek school. It was a Greek school—it's not very exciting here, because they can't find people often. And he hired a teacher, which was costing him an awful lot money, but he paid Greek lesson for his child for many years. And I must say my grandson doesn't speak fluently right now Greek, but he can speak it fluently and correctly. Now, he's all the time, you know he hasn't been to Greece for three, four years and he doesn't have the opportunity to speak as much. I am proud that they gave me an award, the

Greek-Americans, which I think Senator Petris signed at and so on at Yosemite—uh Sacramento. The Action Award, it's one of the awards. Action means that you are worthy. I appreciate that very much although I have other of these uh papers.

I: When did you receive that?

B: It's a—I don't remember.

I: Oh.

B: I think, well must be ten years. If you want it's written, it's there. Is this running? No. Go further.

<tape turns off {164}>
<tape turns on {164}>

I: So, it looks like you received an award in 1992.

B: Which was very appreciated.

I: You go back to Greece every year. Can you want to talk about that?

B: Yeah, if you want to.

I: Sure. Do you spend six weeks?

B: I spend—I'm retired now. My life is mine.

I: When did you retire?

B: I retired in '88.

I: And this was—

B: And after that—I didn't tell you that—I taught two years in English, but San Jose State students. And it wasn't the whole year, it was two semesters in separate years. And it was also a very exciting time, because these students are more willing to study or to go. You see the same thing was with the Gennadion. These students that we had were excellent students, because you would pick them from different universities. And those students want to learn. The ones in—we went to Bath, which is a beautiful city in England. And uh—Well, it was a very successful thing. Now, they're having—they drag their feet. The teachers are the ones who don't want to go, because it disrupts their—I don't know—their life when they have little kids. It's difficult, and it's also economically difficult.

I: So, um now you go back to Greece.

B: I go now that I have a retirement. I feel that what I don't want to happen is that when I arrived in the United States, and met Greeks here, they were unhappy because they were not also in Greece. Or when they were in Greece, they wanted to be in the United States. And I didn't want this to happen, and I told that my husband, I think we have to be able to go. The first years, we weren't able to, to go one year and two, three years pass and then again. And we used to go for a vacation to Mexico or—I have traveled everywhere, almost, almost. But I stick these other experiences into this program of going six months to Greece and of being six months here. So when it's here, I have gone to Hawaii, I have gone to Japan, I have gone places that are more of the west side of the country. But for Greece and for Europe, I take other trips. I have now an apartment in Paris. So, I spend, quite often time in Paris, every year, some time. And then I go to Greece for three, four months.

I: And you stay in Athens?

B: Yes, I have an apartment in Athens. And uh this has nothing to do with being rich. This is a matter of wanting. Naturally, being a teacher has an advantage, because—since they don't pay us, they give us a vacation. And often, the vacation—they take our pay out of the vacation period. So, they're not generous, but it is a good thing. And I would never do anything else than be a teacher.

I: Um

<tape cuts off {202}>
End of Tape 2, Side A

Beginning of Tape 2, Side B
{000}

I: So, you mentioned that you enjoyed being a teacher.

B: Yes.

I: Can you talk a little bit more about why you said that?

B: Well, it has a purpose. And it has a purpose that includes other people. If you ask today's young people, when ask them, they keep saying, "I want to be a lawyer, because I want to make money." That's not the purpose of being a lawyer. There are many more exciting things in becoming a lawyer, but it has become that way because it's the type of law they get into. Um you cannot yet say that you want to become a teacher because you want to make money.

<laughs> That's impossible. Our son was an urban planner for twenty years in Los Angeles. Well, he decided to become a teacher. He was now close to fifty, and it takes courage to do that. However, not only do I admire him for it, but I also find that he has gained from it. He finally has an education. I mean, he reads things, he discusses things. As an urban planner, what did he gain, he gained a little money, of course more money than he gets as a teacher, but what does that result in? Unless you're talking about big money, where I'm not sure about the honesty of big money, 'cause it's difficult to get big money with being very straight. Otherwise it's so unimportant compared to doing things for other people. I'm not—I don't want to say that I am a good doer. I'm not, that's not my uh—but I lived with always people, which in Europe used to be called intelligentsia, I don't place myself as middle class, lower class, upper class, but that I did grow up among the intelligentsia, I did. And so, I've always heard my father was a superb teacher, and not only because he could explain things, but because he took part in the life of students. And this is how he got in trouble too. Because he followed them in their new ideas in what they thought was important. And that's what I see in teaching, I don't see it as a dead, you know, practice. So, I'm happy with it. And even though they don't respect you, in general in the United States. At—deep, deep inside they do, and I even see it in the <unintelligible {029}>, how much they do respect you. But it's, you know, this country grew up differently, grew differently. So.

I: So, would you like to add anything else to this tape?

B: I am happy—

I: About your life? Okay.

B: —if anyone who is listening to me is happy, that's even better. <laughs>

I: <laughs> Thank you.

End of Tape 2, Side B
End of Interview
{034}